

Dear Honorable members of the Energy and Technology Committee:

I am writing in my capacity as President of the Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council (BLEC) to express to you our support for HB 6535 as it has been presented into the legislature. BLEC sprang into existence way back in 1970 to address an ill-conceived massive energy project proposed for one of two possible pristine mountain valley locations in northwest CT or southwestern MA. Since that time we have remained a committed 501 c3 advocacy and watchdog organization to help steer local, regional, and state energy policies and promote sustainable and renewable energy growth in our regions of concern.

We have long supported the efforts to bring anaerobic digesters to process on farm manure and waste produce as well as renewable forms of thermal energy such as woody biomass more into the main stream of our energy mix. As such, our organization is completely in support of adding these two important sources of energy to the definition of Class I renewables and further expanding the existing definition of what has previously been called sustainable biomass to more fully utilize the burgeoning stream of indigenous waste wood in Connecticut.

I, myself, have been down this very road more than 2 decades ago when as a partner to a biomass energy development company we tried to bring some rational and sensible siting and aggregating technologies to bear for what was then a projected need for new sources of electricity. Since those days, I have focused my attention on the emerging opportunities to better utilize thermal energy in woody biomass, but here again, we still find the definitions of what can be considered sustainable too constrictive. Connecticut is blessed with phenomenal resources of wood and wood processing facilities, most of which grind and crush wood fiber into some form of urban waste wood mulch. I find the wasteful, energy-intensive efforts to grind and crush woody biomass and then land spread it wherever we can without any concomitant recovery of some of its the thermal potential thru clean combustion to be one of the biggest energy embarrassments of our age. In this, I include the vast quantities of municipal wood waste, storm debris, line trimmings, etc, etc and not just those materials that only come from sustainably implemented forestry operations. That was an unnecessary constriction when it was adopted and still is to this day.

We need to expand the definition of woody biomass and its sustainable aggregation as well as add other forms of organic waste processing to the to this expanded definition for Class I renewable energy. The broader mix of options and methodologies ensures a more secure and robust alternative and renewable energy marketplace for CT. We thank you for your efforts on behalf of CT's energy future and encourage your positive support of HB 6535.

Sincerely,

Starling W. Childs, MFS  
President, Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council